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ABSTRACT

This study of Japanese families postulated that positive and negative parental attitudes may affect the degree of test anxiety experienced by children in the families. The study used translations of the Reactions to Tests (RTT) inventory and parental attitude tests to identify relationships between child rearing practices and the child's performance in threatening situations such as academic tests. Subjects were 237 male and 239 female undergraduates at Japanese universities. The RTT inventory, the Mother Acts Scale, the Father Acts Scale, and the Mother-Father-Peer Inventory were administered to each subject. Findings indicated that female subjects rated higher scores on parents' child rearing behaviors, and that parental restriction, blame, inconsistency, overprotection and rejection raise the anxiety level of children in testing situations. Praise, on the other hand, correlated with the tension and worry components of the RTT, indicating that praise of a child's behavior enhances anxiety towards testing and the possibility of failure. The results with respect to praise did not support the hypothesis that praise reduces test anxiety, while the results for negative parental attitudes were as predicted. Five tables of results, four references, and three appendixes listing sample test responses are included. (SKC)

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A Study of Effects of Child Rearing Pattern on Test Anxiety in Late Adolescence

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Test anxiety is a widely studied personality variable. One reason is because it provides a measure of the important and definable class of threatening situations, in which people are evaluated. Anxiety is usually defined as a complex state that includes cognitive, emotional, behavioral, and bodily reactions. This suggests the necessity of assessing multiple components of a person's reactions to tests, instead of single dimensional measures such as TAQ (Sarason, S. & Mandler, 1952) or TAS (Sarason, I., 1972).

Reactions to Tests(RTT) by Sarason (1984) which can assess four components of test anxiety was developed as a convenient instrument for investigation of the relation of various components of anxiety to performance. Using a factor analytic approach, 4 subscales of the RTT were developed. These subscales are Tension, Worry, Test-Irrelevant Thinking, and Bodily Symptoms, and consist of 10 items respectively. Each scale has a possible score range of 10-40.

There are certain correlations between anxiety state and parent-child relationships (Schachter, 1959). Parents' expectancy toward children and child rearing patterns might influence a child's performance in threatening situations, that is those in which children are evaluated. We hypothesized that parents' 1) Supportive behavior, Encouragement, and Acceptance for the child decrease the threat of evaluated situations, 2) Restriction, Blame, Inconsistent behavior, Overprotection, and Rejection of child's behavior increase the anxiety towards testing situations.

In order to assess the effects of parents' child rearing patterns on the total score of RTT and 4 subscales, we used the Mother/Father (Parents) Acts Scales (Krohne, 1980) and Mother-

Father-Peer (MFP) Inventory (O'brien). Parents Acts Scales consist of 5 subscales, Support, Restriction, Praise, Blame, and Inconsistency. MFP Inventory consists of 2 bipolar subscales, Independence-Encouragement vs. Overprotection and Acceptance vs. Rejection.

Subscales of RTT gives detailed considerations to these effects. The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of parents' child rearing patterns on the child's test anxiety in late adolescence.

Methods

Subjects were 237 male and 239 female college students of Doshisha University and Shujitsu Junior College. Reactions to Tests, Mother Acts Scale and Father Acts Scale, and Mother-Father-Peer Inventory translated by the authors into Japanese were administered. Reactions to Tests consist of 4 subscales (Tension, Worry, Task Irrelevant Thoughts and Bodily Symptoms). These items have 4 rating categories. Mother Acts Scale and Father Acts Scale consist of 5 subscales each (Support, Restriction, Praise, Blame and Inconsistency) whose items have 4 rating categories. Mother-Father-Peer Inventory consists of 2 bipolar subscales (Independence-Encouragement vs. Overprotection and Acceptance vs. Rejection). These items have 5 rating categories. Sample items of these scales are shown in Appendixes A, B, and C.

Result and Discussion

Table 1 shows the mean scores and standard deviations for 4 subscales and total score of the Reactions to Test. The degree of test anxiety measured by the RTT is not statistically significant

concerning the sex of the subjects.

Table 2 shows the mean scores and t values concerning the sexes of the subjects for the Mother Scale and Father Scale of the Parents' Acts Scales and MFP Scale. In Mother scale, child rearing scores are significantly higher on the scales Support, Restriction, Praise, and Blame at 1% level for females, and on Acceptance vs. Rejection at 1% level for males. In the Father Scale, the scores are significantly higher on Praise, Independence vs. Overprotection, and Acceptance vs. Rejection at 1% level for females. As a whole, female subjects rated higher scores towards parents' rearing behaviors. The exception was father's Independence and Acceptance behavior towards female subjects, suggests that the mother's concern toward a female child is stronger than the father's.

Table 3 shows the correlations of the RTT Total score and 4 scales with Parents Acts Scales and MFP Scale (male and female together). The Total score of the RTT shows the significant correlation with Restriction (+), Blame (+), Inconsistency (+), Independence vs. Overprotection (-), and Acceptance vs. Rejection both for mother and father. (Except for the father's Independence vs. Overprotection at 5% levels of significance, all correlations are significant at 1% level.) These correlations suggest that parents' Restriction, Blame, Inconsistency, Overprotection, and Rejection raise the anxiety level of children in testing situations. Praise does not show significant correlation with the Total score of the RTT, but it correlates with Tension and Worry at 1% significance level in Mother scale and with Tension at 1% and Worry at 5% significance level in Father scale. These results mean that praise of child's behavior enhance the excessive tension

towards the testing, and increase the worry of coming failure of the test.

At first we expected the supportive acts of parents was expected to decrease the test anxiety of child. However, Support shows only significant correlation with Task Irrelevant Thoughts in Father scale at 1% level. With female subjects Support correlates significantly at 5% level with Task Irrelevant Thoughts and also shows with Body Symptoms at 5% level (Table 4). When the father supports the female child. this supportive behavior will decrease the thoughts of escape and somatic responses of testing situation.

Table 1
Means and Standard Deviations for RTT Total Score and Four Scales

Measure	Complete Sample m	Complete Sample SD	Males m	Males SD	Females m	Females SD	t
Total Score	84.91	15.30	84.31	15.91	85.50	14.65	-0.85
Tension	23.72	5.23	23.38	5.44	24.05	4.98	-1.39
Worry	23.59	4.50	23.28	4.64	23.90	4.34	-1.51
Task Irrelevant Thoughts	21.21	5.09	21.40	4.97	21.03	5.20	0.80
Bodily Symptoms	16.39	4.32	16.25	4.41	16.52	4.22	-0.69
Number of Subjects	476		237		239		
Degrees of Freedom							475

Table 2
Mean Scores for Parents Acts Scales and MFP Scale

Measure	Mother Males	Mother Females	Mother t	Father Males	Father Females	Father t
Parents Acts Scale						
Support	41.49	47.38	-7.47**	42.12	43.60	-1.60
Restriction	34.46	36.96	-3.78**	31.45	31.50	-0.08
Praise	44.95	51.13	-6.54**	40.99	46.12	-5.14**
Blame	39.30	43.87	-5.15**	38.62	38.99	-0.03
Inconsistency	31.06	31.57	-0.86	33.12	31.80	1.82
MFP Scale						
Independence vs. Overprotection	38.14	38.28	-0.22	32.76	34.74	-3.38+
Acceptance vs. Rejection	41.04	38.78	3.64*	30.13	33.16	-4.97*
Number of Subjects	237	239		237	239	
Degrees of Freedom			475			475

Table 3
Correlation of RTT Total Score and Four Scales With Parents Acts Scale and MFP Scale (Complete Sample)

R T T	Total	T	W	Ir	B S
Mother Scale					
Support	.02	.06	.00	-.01	-.01
Restriction	.20**	.16**	.14**	.15**	.17**
Praise	.09	.16**	.13**	-.03	.02
Blame	.16**	.20**	.18**	.06	.08
Inconsistency	.25**	.15**	.15**	.30**	.21**
Independence vs. Overprotection	-.17**	-.11*	-.11*	-.18**	-.16**
Acceptance vs. Rejection	-.20**	-.13**	-.13**	-.20**	-.19**
Father Scale					
Support	-.08	-.01	-.03	-.13**	-.08
Restriction	.20**	.17**	.12**	.15**	.21**
Praise	.09	.14**	.10*	.00	.06
Blame	.20**	.18**	.21**	.32**	.24*
Inconsistency	.36**	.20**	.27**	.40**	.28**
Independence vs. Overprotection	-.11*	-.06	-.04	-.17**	-.07
Acceptance vs. Rejection	-.17**	-.11*	-.08	-.20**	-.13**
Peer Scale					
Acceptance vs. Rejection	-.20**	-.10*	-.14**	-.24**	-.16**

note) df=474. ** $p<.01$. * $p<.05$.

Table 4
Correlation of RTT Total Score and Four Scales With Parents Acts Scale and MFP Scale (Females)

R T T	Total	T	W	Ir	B S
Mother Scale					
Support	-.04	-.02	-.00	-.06	-.09
Restriction	.17*	.15*	.08	.15*	.13
Praise	.03	.11	.10	-.06	-.06
Blame	.10	.16*	.14*	.01	.02
Inconsistency	.18*	.07	.09	.25**	.13
Independence vs. Overprotection	-.23**	-.13	-.16*	-.23**	-.21**
Acceptance vs. Rejection	-.22**	-.15*	-.15*	-.16*	-.24**
Father Scale					
Support	-.12	-.06	.04	-.14*	-.14*
Restriction	.21**	.18*	.12	.14*	.23**
Praise	.03	.08	.07	-.03	-.02
Blame	.17*	.15*	.12	.12	.13
Inconsistency	.33**	.22**	.25**	.32**	.22**
Independence vs. Overprotection	-.15*	-.10	-.08	-.20**	-.07
Acceptance vs. Rejection	-.19**	-.20**	-.09	-.17*	-.12
Peer Scale					
Acceptance vs. Rejection	-.25**	-.10	-.19**	-.30**	-.19**

note) df=237. ** $p<.01$, * $p<.05$.

Table 5
Correlation of RTT Total Score and Four Scales With Parents Acts Scale and MFP Scale (Males)

R T T	Total	T	W	Ir	B S
Mother Scale					
Support	-.05	.06	.05	-.01	.09
Restriction	.22**	.18**	.18**	.17**	.19**
Praise	.13	.13**	.13	.02	.09
Blame	.21**	.22**	.19**	.13	.13
Inconsistency	.33**	.22**	.20**	.36**	.30**
Independence vs. Overprotection	-.12	-.09	-.07	-.13	-.10-.
Acceptance vs. Rejection	-.18*	-.09	-.08	-.26**	-.14*
Father Scale					
Support	-.04	.04	-.02	-.11	-.03
Restriction	.20**	.16*	.12	.16*	.19**
Praise	.14*	.17*	.10	.05	.13
Blame	.23**	.21**	.16*	.16*	.21**
Inconsistency	.29**	.19**	.19**	.31**	.27**
Independence vs. Overprotection	-.08	-.04	-.03	-.12	-.08-
Acceptance vs. Rejection	-.17*	-.06	-.10	-.24**	-.17*
Peer Scale					
Acceptance vs. Rejection	-.16*	-.11	-.11	-.17*	-.15*

note) df=235, ** p<.01, * p<.05.

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Appendix A
Contents of Sample Items for the Reactions to Tests

Measure	No.	Contents
Tension	5.	I freeze up when I think about an upcoming test.
Worry	1.	I feel distressed and uneasy before tests.
Task Irrelevant Thought	3.	During tests, I find myself thinking of things unrelated to the material being tested.
Bodily Symptoms	10.	I feel the need to go to the toilet more often than usual during a test.

Rating Categories	
1	Not at all typical of me
2	Only somewhat typical of me
3	Quite typical of me
4	Very typical of me

Appendix B
Contents of Sample Items for the Parents Acts Scales

Measure	No.	Contents
Support	2.	My mother/father shows me how to work things that I want to handle.
Restriction	3.	When I ride my bike, my mother/father says to be careful.
Praise	1.	My mother/father is pleased when I receive a good grade on a test.
Blame	4.	When I disobey my mother/father in front of company, she/he gets mad.
Inconsistency	5.	My father lets me get away with things that other times she/he punishes me for.
Rating Categories		
	1	Never
	2	Sometimes
	3	Often
	4	Almost Always

Appendix C
Contents of Sample Items for the Mother-Father-Peer Scales

Measure	No.	Contents
Mother/Father Scales		(When I was a child, my mother/father:)
Independence vs. Overprotection	1.	encouraged me to make my own decision. (+)
	7.	did not let me do things that other kids my age were allowed to do. (-)
Acceptance vs. Rejection	9.	enjoyed being with me. (+)
	13.	was often rude to me. (-)
Peer Scale		(When I was a child, other children:)
Acceptance vs. Rejection	47.	liked to play with me. (+)
	48.	were always criticizing me. (-)
Rating Categories		
	1	Strongly Disagree with Statement
	2	Somewhat Disagree with Statement
	3	Uncertain about Statement
	4	Somewhat Agree with Statement
	5	Strongly Agree with Statement